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No. 31

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, February 18, 2022, at 10 a.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2022

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARTIN HEINRICH, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Mighty God, the refuge and strength for all who trust You, come close to us, as we lift our hearts in prayer. Lord, help us to love You as You deserve. Inspire us to love one another as You have loved us.

Today, bless our lawmakers in their work. Warm their hearts, increase their faith, and make them more conscious of Your transforming presence. Lord, breathe Your peace into their hearts, as they strive to build a better nation and world. Please do for us more than we can ask or imagine.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 16, 2022.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARTIN HEINRICH, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore

Mr. HEINRICH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Celeste Ann Wallander, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

UKRAINE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, President Biden addressed the country about the ongoing crisis that Russia has created on its border with Ukraine.

There was much in the President's remarks that I appreciated. He was right to candidly remind the Russian people that neither the United States nor NATO nor Ukraine wants a war. He was right to emphasize that the world will not shrug or stand idly by if Vladimir Putin tries to invade his neighbor or redraw the map of Europe through deadly force.

We have spent much time discussing Russia's alleged security concerns and not enough time examining the legitimate concerns of Russia's neighbors, many of whom have a long history—a long history—of being invaded by Moscow. The concerns of these free, sovereign states matter as well, and the President would do well to amplify their voices and their historical experiences.

So it is fine for President Biden to engage in good-faith diplomacy, provided we are skeptical about Putin's intentions. Thus far, Putin's behavior is proving how little he can be trusted and how little he is interested in diplomacy as anything other than a gambit to divide the West or a pretext for war.

The United States must keep sending these strong messages, verbally and with concrete actions, both right now before any hostilities and then with

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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